To: Mayor-Elect Lightfoot Transition Team - Good Governance

Name: Derek Eder, DataMade, Chi Hack Night, Civic House

Prompt: Create a more accessible government for all Chicagoans including through greater language access and community input on core government functions.

A potential initiative (one sentence)
The City of Chicago should launch a Digital Service Delivery Team to lead technology implementation for delivering services to residents.

How the new administration can infuse the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation in this initiative
The City of Chicago should launch a Digital Service Delivery Team to lead technology implementation for delivering services to residents. Chicago can learn from and replicate the successful 18F and United States Digital Service agencies at the federal level, as well as state and city-level digital agencies in Massachusetts, California, Austin, and San Francisco. These agencies focus on making the experience of government better for residents.

The current state of interacting with many of the City's services is poor. Of the services that the City offers, many of them are difficult to find, confusing to navigate, lack accessibility, and don't offer multi-language support. Additionally, many city services still rely solely on a pen and paper processes and are very difficult for residents to find and complete. As a result, those who get the most out of the City's services are those who are privileged, well resourced, and have enough free time to wade through and understand the process.

By creating a Digital Service Delivery Team, the City can address these challenges by following industry best practices and build services in-house that put the needs of residents first by:

- Making online services available to all Chicagoans
- Letting users guide their work and focus on the resident experience
- Developing quicker and less expensive than before
- Building and releasing code as open source to prevent costly vendor lock-in
- Collaborating as peers with policy and program owners through a design and delivery process that is truly inclusive that delivers real results for residents

It is critical that the Digital Service Delivery Team be created in-house with City staff, as they would need to work with all City agencies without restriction, provide a consistent and reliable set of services, and be able to quickly and effectively shift their focus to the areas of greatest need. Additionally, by building up the City's technical talent internally, it will enable the City to better partner with existing vendors, resulting in higher-quality work and faster execution.

Imagine residents having positive and consistent interactions with their City through well designed, thoughtful, and and accessible digital services instead of the frustrating experience they have now. It is possible!

What is happening today that we need to keep
The Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) already has many skilled and competent team members that perform this kind of work, including the data science team and the Design Director. These City staff already know where many, if not all, of the challenges lie but lack the authority and resources to execute. These staff should be kept.

Additionally, the Chicago Design Director has created chicagodesignsystem.org, which provides a strong foundation for how new digital services should consistently function and be designed.

What we need to implement in the next 100 days
The new administration needs to create a Director of Digital Services position who will be responsible for building up the Digital Service Delivery Team. The Director must have sufficient experience and leadership to attract and recruit technical talent.

For early and continued success, this new team needs to be partnered with willing and enthusiastic collaborators in other city departments. As the team delivers these successes, those departments will evangelize their work.

What we can plan for longer-term implementation
The Digital Service Delivery Team will need to implement a road map for transforming the City's digital services in the long term. Existing digital services must be evaluated and ones that are missing must be identified. Then, the team must prioritize their work plan, starting with the highest-impact services first.

What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative
The biggest challenge this initiative faces is sustainability. 18F funds their team using a cost recovery model where they can charge other departments for their work. For the Digital Service Delivery Team to survive and thrive, a similar cost recovery or other funding mechanism should be considered.

Another big challenge will be getting institutional buy-in from DoIT and other City agencies. This team will be operating differently than a traditional IT team and will need high-level buy-in from the Mayor's office and department leadership.